thought is indeed exhilarating and yet it is attended by doubts and misgivings. Every time I pick up "Judaism as a Civilization" I discover some weakness in the content or in the style. Only today it occurred to me that "nexus" in the definition of "civilization as a nexus of history, language, etc." is the wrong word. It is very seldom that my first, or even third formulation of an idea expresses exactly what I want to say. If I were to psychoanalyze myself I would say that this limitation is the result of my repressed emotional life. For both clarity and brilliance of style are possible only when the emotions are given free play. Emotion sends the right word to the mind at the right moment. I am not able to let myself go, as it were, in what I write and speak. The reason is that I am dominated by the practical consideration that only by tacking is it possible to make opposite winds bring you to the goal you desire. The goal I desire is security in a universally cooperative world with a maximum of personal and group individuation. As a realist, or as an unadventurous tenderfoot, I prefer to work with existing traditions and institutions though essentially they are moving in the very opposite direction of the goal on which my heart is set. This is where my navigation, so to speak, comes in. Tacking is a cold calculating business requiring the exercise of control and endurance. This being the kind of thing I have to do all my life, no wonder it is devoid of the emotionalism that supplies the winged word at the moment it is needed. I not only have to labor hard to achieve the synthesis between my purpose and the forces that work against them, but even more so to express that synthesis in words.

With all my effort to be tolerant toward the traditionalist and Orthodox Jews I find it very hard to condone the injury they are inflicting upon Jewish life and thought.

What they do to Jewish life was brought home to my by the description of Toronto Jewry given me by Rabbi Treiger and his wife, who called last Saturday. The large element controlled by the immigrant Polish rabbis are unamenable to ommunal organizations mainly because those rabbis put all kinds of obstacles in the way or organizations. Though they are for the most part unable to render any kind of social service they insist upon being supported by the community, and when the latter makes no provision for them they deliberately wreck it.

An illustration of how Orthodoxy perverts the mentality of the Jews came to my attention this morning after the services at the SAJ. Ira spoke briefly on the prophetic reading. In the course of his remarks he referred to the fact that the reading was taken from the second part of Isaiah, which according to modern scholarship is regarded as not coming from the Isaiah of the first part of the book that bears his name. Among those that came up to greet us was a man who described himself as a former student of the Yeshivah. He was not a rabbi, he explained, but was in the coal business. That being his background he felt he had a right to object to Ira's statements about the second Isaiah. Although it was the truth, it was "epikursos" to present it. "Do you yourself believe it is the truth?" I asked. "Yes," he replied. "Still I maintain it is wrong to preach it." "But our people here are accustomed to being told the truth. They want to know the truth," I said. "How about the belief in God?" he questioned. Apparently he is quite in doubt as to the existence of God, but he protests vigorously against denying the Isaiahnic authorship of the second part of Isaiah.

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Sunday, September 8, 1935

In the entry on p. 43 I stated only one side of the dilemma in which we Jews find ourselves - the danger of being destroyed both as a people and to a large extent also individually, if we identify ourselves with Communism. The other horn of the dilemma is the impossibility of isolating ourselves from the rest of the world. I subscribe fully to the following by Hans Kohn (New Republic, July 31, 1935) "In a world of political and economic nationalism, a nationalistic solution of the Jewish problem seems natural. But for the world in general there is no hope in political and economic nationalism. Both lead ultimately to more conflict and growing chaos. There are no easy solutions. The transitional age in which we live apparently does not allow a sheltered and peaceful life. The solution of the Jewish problem, as far as it is a political and social problem, seems to be bound up more than ever with the solution of the general problems of mankind." I certainly could not state more clearly the case for the inevitability of Jewish intervention in the class struggle.

Rabbi Harold Goldfarb, one of the recent graduates of the Seminary came to see me a little over a week ago to ask my advice as to the attitude he should take toward questions of change in mode of worship in connection with a congregation that might be organized on the lower East side. Rabbi Lookstein of the Yeshibah was trying to get them to take a Yeshibah graduate. But due to the mediation of one of Goldfarb's friends, Goldfarb came to be considered for the position. The first question that arose was whether men and women should be seated together or segregated. I told Goldfarb yhat if he wants the congregation to follow his leadership he should persuade them to have the men and women seated together. Once he compromises on that point, it will be impossible for him to introduce any changes

in the ritual, or in the general spirit of the work he wants to do with them. At first, it seems, he was on the point of getting them to yield at least to the suggestion that they come to see me and discuss matters with me. I had told him that I would be glad to have them come to see me. But something must have happened which upset his plans, because the meeting which was to have taken place last Tuesday night was suddenly called off.

Perhaps we have been all wrong in taking for granted that it is religion's business to continue its traditional and ineffective practice of muckracking and denouncing sins and sinners. With literature and the stage doing that so much more ably - though how effectively is another question - why should not religion take up that which literature and the stage don't care to do, namely, prove that in spite of man's depravity there is still some hope for him and in spite of all the suffering and misery in the world, life is still worthwhile. This division of labor might help religion to serve a useful purpose in modern society.

* * *

Monday, September 9, 1935

The difficulty with the foregoing suggestion is that it doesn't take into account the fact that the teacher of religion is usually also an ethicist. As a teacher of ethics he has to promulgate the "ought" in behavior and opinion. To do that he must naturally stress what is wrong with life and thought as they are. He must therefore do, even if less ably, what the playwrights and writers do, expose human perversity. Withal that he has a definite and, needless to say, a very important job. He has to be the surgeon of the soul trying to save it in the objective and dispassionate manner of the surgeon of the body. He ought to be essentially a psychologist of the Adler

type and a social worker of the late Jane Addams type. But the religionist has an altogether different task. His work should consist in discovering and accentuating every possible element of worthwhileness in the most depressing and gruesome situations. When he sees, e.g. (as I did last night) a picture on the screen depicting the pitiless sturggles for existence that go on among all forms of reptile life in the scorching desert air that shrivels up all other life and vegetation, he would point out the marvel of human curiosity and daring that enable man to explore these wastelands and the redeeming glory of that human trait which impels the lonely miner in such wild regions to put up a tent and a bed for any traveller that may chance by. Or to take another instance, the ethicist in reading the account of the experiences of the passengers who were rescued from the Dixie that foundered last week on a reef, would hold up to ridicule the vanity of the women who powdered their noses while wading knee deep in water with their life-belts on. The teacher of religion would emphasize the heroism and self-control of passengers and crew during the trying hours when they hung between life and death.

In the light of all this I begin to understand what Christian Science is after. It aims to separate religion even from ethics, and to confine it to the function of bringing healing and consolation to the human spirit which is bruised by the harsh realities of our world. It does this in the cheap and crude fashion of the circus announcer, who plays on the ignorance and low tastes of the audience because he doesn't know any better. But can't this approach be worked out on a higher level, with more refined taste and greater regard for ascertained truth? That approach cannot be Christian, nor go by the name Science. It must be universal religion which appeals to the individual human being and enables him to transcend all historic and

national groupings and folk traditions and practices. It certainly cannot be "Reform Judaism" or "Ethical Culture." It must eschew not only the past history of any particular society, but also all tendencies to evolve a future history for its adherents as a group or chain of groups. Only by detaching itself from all possible "church" complications will such a religion remain loyal to its own limited but highly needed function of emphasizing the worthwhileness in life.

This afternoon I met some of the students and recent graduates of the Seminary to discuss the sermons for the High Holy Days. No notice having been sent out beforehand, the number present was not large nor their calibre high. Nevertheless I managed to make considerable progress in developing with them the theme I had prepared to discuss with them.

Rubinstein, Pollock and Picheny came to see me at 5:00 and tried to get me to say that I advocated the recognition on the part of Benderly of the Worker's Council. I refused to do that on the ground that I was not prepared to make any statement either for or against such recognition. My contention was that I shall not pass any opinion on the controversy in its present stage. The only way out is to have a committee conduct hearings which would give both sides a chance to state their case.

At 5:45 a certain Goldhammer called. He is the Executive Director of the Cleveland Jewish Federation. He came to ask my advice with reference to the Jewish educational situation in Cleveland. It has been suggested that Federation conduct a survey to find out what the actual result is of past efforts in the Jewish training of the young, to what extent people are interested in Jewish education,

and if not, why not. He asked me what I thought of such a survey. I pointed out to him that it would confirm our knowledge of the growing indifference to things Jewish and would serve Federation as a valid excuse for withdrawing its support from the Jewish schools. Instead of a survey, I advised that a committee of Jewish educational experts be appointed to examine the entire problem of content. Convinced as I am that we have been teaching or trying to teach the wrong things the only hope of overcoming the indifference to Judaism lies in discovering the kind of content that would create and maintain an interest in it. I even went so far as to suggest Rosen of Philadelphia, Golub who is now in Harrisburg and Berkson who recently returned from Palestine.

Tonight Judge Rosalsky, Wachman and I met with Benderly to decide what to do about the fight between him and the staff. At first I was in favor of turning the entire matter to a committee of outsiders. Benderly was admant against leaving the matter to outsiders. I was going to exempt myself from serving only with Rosalsky as an examining committee. It was finally decided to coopt four more people. This time I had my way when I insisted that two of the four be professional educators. We agreed on calling in Konowitz and Handler.

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Wednesday, September 11, 1935

About two weeks ago Dr. Moses Jung called. He is a brother of Leo Jung, my successor at the Jewish Center, representative of the Agudah and a violent opponent of mine. When we meet in the street I feel embarrassed, for as a colleague I ought to greet him, but as the object of frequent attacks on his part I ought to ignore him. He probably feels the same way about me. I was therefore quite surprised

to learn from Rabbi Gershon Levi, one of the recent Seminary graduates, who was at Jerusalem at the same time I was there, that Moses Jung, who teaches religion in the State University of Iowa, wanted to get my advice about some matter. I also learned that Moses Jung was married to a sister of Gershon Levi's and was more human than his brother Leo. He happened to be in Palestine about the same time, but somehow was prevented from meeting me there. He therefore came to see me after I got back to N. Y.

What the Levis had told me about Moses Jung being a very agreeable person and nothing like his brother turned out to be true. I really enjoyed his company xxx and was delighted to hear him talk sensibly about matters of common interest to us. I was very much disturbed by what he came to get my advice about. Among the Jewish students who come to his and other western universities from this part of the country, there is a large contingent - about 25% - who are not only intellectually below standard, but even more so morally. They make themselves extremely offensive on the campus and outside. The consequence is that prejudice against Jewish students in general is on the increase and before we know it they will find it hard to gain admission into the state universities. I advised him to write to the Jewish national bodies like the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Congress, IOBB and Arbeiter Ring to organize a committee that would act as a sort of clearing house for information concerning students applying to any of the universities. The authorities of the universities could get the information it needs from that Committee. That would help to keep out the undesirable applicants and make the desirable ones realize that there are some people in Jewish life with whose opinion they must learn to reckon. This might serve as an entering wedge into the present state of communal irresponsibility in American Jewry and enable our people to realize the need for having some kind of authoritative agency for the expression of Jewish public opinion.

Thursday, September 12, 1935

Destiny seems to have brought us to a point where either we commit ourselves as a people to some world-saving cause whether it be Communism or pacifism, and in the resulting collision with the forces of greed and reaction perish in a code of fire and uproar, or we keep on compromising with those same forces only to die a lingering death and dwindle slowly into nothingness.

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Sunday, September 15, 1935

As I was taking a walk this evening it occurred to me that an appropriate title for the book dealing with the reinterpreation of the Sabbath and the Festivals would be "The Meaning of God in Jewish Religion."

The last few days I have been working on the manuscript "Judaism in Transition" making a number of revisions and correcting typographical errors. Macmillans is ready to publish it, but I am still waiting to hear about the terms.

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Tuesday, September 17, 1935

Last Thursday I attended the meeting called by Judge Rosalsky in accordance with the decision arrived at at the meeting of Monday, Sept. 9. There were eight of us including Dr. Benderly, Semel, who has had very much experience in arbitrating disputes rightly pointed out that we made a mistake in having coopted four members on the committee without having consulted the other party to the dispute. His suggestion was that the Trustees of the Bureau take up the hearings without the additional four who were there that night. If it will become necessary to organize a committee on conciliation we should have the teachers and others involved give their consent to the names proposed.

Last night the Trustees met as it had done the meeting before in the library of the SAJ and the hearings were begun. Besides Rosalsky, Benderly, Wachman and me there were the teachers, an office worker, representatives of a parents' organization, a representative of the Association of Federation Workers and of the Teachers organization. The hearings lasted from 8:15 to 1:30. I arrived at the following conclusions: Benderly made the following serious mistakes: 1) He was not in sufficient contact with the work of the teachers and relied too much upon intermediaries who themselves should not have had such confidence reposed in them. 2) He never indicated to any of the teachers that they were incompetent, though they undoubtedly were that. 3) He permitted teachers who were guilty of misconduct to go on teaching. 4) He allowed himself to be carried away by Rudavsky in discharging teachers because of their organizing themselves into a Workers Council. 5) He played into the hands of the Workers Council by dismissing those teachers summarily without stating to them the cause.

The teachers, on the other hand, are, in my opinion, not the kind who should ever have been engaged or encouraged to become teachers. The two or three Junior teachers who were among those dismissed summarily had been the star pupils whom Benderly had ?(p.50) for years in his Arverne Camp Achvah. I doubt whether any of them turned out well. The products of that camp during the first five or six years of its existence are a clear proof that his whole approach pedagogically and Jewishly has been all wrong. I can't say that anyone else would have done better, but he certainly together with Mrs. Benderly, are like parents who mean well with their children, give their life for them, but are unfortunate in not knowing how to bring them up.

The result of Benderly's protracted mismanagement of the teachers is hat the Bureau is infested with a moral plague of which it will probably never rid itself. If I had my say I would suggest that the entire work be reorganized and Benderly retired. He himself was never the right man for that job, in spite of the right feeling he had about Jewish education being made a communal project. He is too much the Levantine Jew besides being incapable of choosing the right people to work for him. The latter fact has come to the fore in the ruthless and unscrupulous manner in which his people have been attacking him in the press, on the platform and the various letters sent to Federation and others.

I bore myself calmly during the entire proceedings. I prevented Rosalsky from leaving a bad impression as the representatives of the parents' organization by his dismissing them without any discussion. I managed to counteract the effect on them of the teachers' propaganda. Secondly, I insisted and won my point that the schools should be reopened at once, and the committee on conciliation be permitted to sift the charges against the teachers, etc. and against Benderly. Just as everything was about to be settled young Shoshuk piped up that the teachers ought to go into conclave before accepting he plan. This infuriated me and I broke up the meeting.

This morning, I understand, the teachers came to Benderly's office in a repentant mood and arrangements were made to proceed with the opening of the schools. Benderly called me this afternoon to tell me that what I did was a master stroke. He was going to keep Picheny out. I insisted that Picheny remain until his case be studied by the committee on conciliation.

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Wednesday, September 18, 1935

There seems to be a hitch in the negotiations with Macmillans. It appears that the action of the Board of Editors in accepting my book for print was perfunctory and that since then their attention must have been called to the nature of the subject matter which deals with communism and fascism and which stresses the need of Jewish organization; very prickly subjects these days. I have learned this afternoon that the manuscript is in the hand of readers and that this was the reason for the delay in letting me know the terms which I had been led to expect would be stated to me the beginning of this week.

I had lunch with Joseph Levy at Longchamps this afternoon. We arranged this lunch mainly to thresh out the question whether it was advisable to make the change I had suggested in the reading of the Haftorah. The fear that Rosenblatt and Klein might feel themselves deprived of the opportunity to read the Haftarah led Levy to oppose my introducing the change which requires that the Cantor read it instead of the one called up to Maftir. The reason I would have the Cantor read it is that no one except perhaps Sol Lampert understands what he reads or is able to read the text without blunders that betray am ha-arazut. After much discussion I got Levy to concede in a qualified way the advisability of the change.

The foregoing by itself is of trivial import, but it becomes significant in the light of what in the course of the conversation I learned concerning the inner conflict in his mind. At heart he seems not only to have lost interest in Judaism, but to regard it as superfluous. "I don't consider it worthwhile," he said. "Why not throw off the whole thing and act as freely as the Gentiles? I can't see anything wrong in intermarrying. I believe in humanity," and

sentiments of a similar character. So this is the product of my efforts with the SAJ! He was one of those who left the Center and helped me organize the SAJ. He is surrounded by a family of fanatical Jews, one-hundred percent Orthodox. But it is a dying Judaism and the putrescence of it is intolerable. With no signs of anything vital or stirring the few that have held on to the Jewish people are letting go. Is it a wonder that the old feeling of being tied to a carcass is coming over me once again?

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Sunday, September 22, 1935

The day on which the opening exercises of the Teachers Institute takes place is one of the days each year I look forward to with a great deal of trepidation. This is the case because of the inner conflict that it starts. I don't know whether I should speak in Hebrew, which I would like to but can't do sufficiently well in, or in English which, no matter how well I do in is bound to strike a jarring note. As a rule - to which there have been but few exceptions - I start by preparing to speak in Hebrew, but when the decisive moment comes, I weaken and give the talk in English. The consequence is that I feel frustrated. Today, fortunately, I did not weaken and gave my talk in Hebrew. For this I feel quite grateful and happy.

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Monday, September 23, 1935

I was so pleased with myself at having spoken in Hebrew that I forgot to state what I spoke about. Referring to my having been in Palestine, I made the point that Herzl's saying (p.52) אם תרצו אין זו אגדה has come true. The Jewshave wanted, although it has been the kind of wanting referred to in the Talmud as רצון שלמטה רצון שלמעלה. And the result is that הלכה למשה מסיני is no more Aggadah but Halakah with all that

Halakah implies, prosaic character, controversy. However, as against these it has the advantage of Aggadah in being no more fancy but action. This is evident from the tremendous progress which Palestine is making accompanied by a great deal of partisan strife and bickering.

With my interest in Palestine as the spearhead of the movement to reconstruct Jewish life I was interested in studying the attitude of Palestine Jewry toward the Golah. I found that the Palestinian attitude is in keeping with the first part of Hillel's dictum (p. 52) אם אין אני לי מי לי but that it disregards the truth of . Palestinian Jewry pays no attention to what is happening spiritually to the Jews in the diaspora. It is unaware of the fact that the time has passed when a little people enclosed within its own narrow boundaries can play a significant role in the world. On the other hand, we Hebraist Jews in the diaspora recognize that ואין אני אלא מה אני without Palestine our spiritual life is without root. But we forget the truth of אם אין אני לי מי לי and do nothing to build up some kind of Jewish life in America. I then told the story of R. Jose's disciples who couldn't concentrate on what he was taught, because he was away from home. When R. Jose asked him what kind of a place he lived in, he described it as so full of fleas and mosquitoes that when a child was born it was in danger of being eaten up by them. Hearing this account R. Jose explained ולמדן שנתן טעם לדבריו I interpreted the story homiletically and suggested that if we avail ourselves of this natural tendency to discover the spiritual possibilities of Jewish life in this country. I concluded with the reminder to both Palestinian and American Jewry that they both made good the lack in their respective programs, .

I am still in the process of finding the most suitable terms for the frame of reference which I have invented as a means of evaluating human behavior and its products. At this stage I think of the frame as consisting of levels and horizons. The levels refer to the "factors of demand." They are impulse, habit and intelligence. The horizonsrefer to "the factors of endorsement." They are the ego, society and cosmos.

I believe I have come upon an interesting and far-reaching thought in discovering that friendship is not a relationship between two human beings like those between relatives or business associates, but only a quality which may or may not be present in human relationships. There can be no friendship unless there is some concrete relationship based on a common interest of some kind without which no relationship would exist. That relationship possesses the quality of friendship if in addition to serving the particular interest it brings forth a certain excess sense of attachment which transcends that interest. The same line of reasoning may be pursued with regard to godhood or holiness which can be only a quality of the various relationships between man and his environment, but not a separately existing relationship.

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Tuesday, October 1, 1935

Tuesday, Sept. 17 I mailed to Judge Rosalsky a letter of resignation as member of the Board of Directors of the Bureau. I gave as a reason the pressure of work though the actual reason was the fear of being drawn into the task of adjudicating the issues of the controversy between Benderly and his staff and helping to clean out his Augean stable. Upon receiving this letter Rosalsky at once called up B. and B. called me up asking me to hold off with the resignation until he

to see me. B. came last week (I don't recall the day) and appealed to our mutual friendship to withdraw the resignation. He promised first that I would be allowed to keep out of the committee which would take up the complaints against the teachers and secondly that he would publish a statement in which he would itemize his complaints against the teachers. This latter promise I elicited from him myself.

The services on Rosh ha-Shanah were well attended and both my sermon and Ira's were well received. My topic was "Faith in Humanity

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Milton Steinberg on various occasions asked me to organize and lead an editorial committee that would undertake the revision of the prayer-book. In the past I failed to respond to his suggestion wholeheartedly. But when he made it again yesterday I consented to act on his suggestion. The committee is to consist of Steinberg, Eugene Kohn, Ira, Boxer, Lang and myself. We decided to prepare a mahzor for the High Holydays. I've already worked out the Maariv service for Rosh ha-Shanah.

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Wednesday, October 2, 1935

This has been a happy day for me as far as my personal affairs are concerned. I accepted the invitation of the local YMHA (92 St.) to give a course of six lectures on "The Reconstruction of Jewish Life." The remuneration of $300 will make it considerably easier for me to incur such incidental expenses as are necessary to expedite the publication of the literary material I have on hand.

Secondly, Miss Shiffen of the Macmillan Co. called up to tell me that there was a favorable report on the ms. I had submitted, and that they will proceed with the publication of it as soon as we come to terms.

But it seems almost a shame to enjoy one's own good luck at a time when mankind is about the plunge once more into the abyss of war. The papers this evening carry the news that Italy has begun hostilities. God knows what lies ahead.

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Friday, October 4, 1935

Last Wednesday night I attended the opening of the Hayden Planetarium adjoining the Museum of Natural History. The ceremonies were impressive, but one thing marred them for me and that was Hayden's opening statement about the necessity of turning men's minds to the wonders of creation and getting them to think of life in spiritual terms especially "in these days when Bolshevisim and Socialism" are turning men's thoughts to material things. So naive a confession only a simple-minded American capitalist could utter. Realizing the failure of the churches to provide effective opiate the plunderbund is intent upon capitalizing the visible heaven for that purpose. It is to be hoped that Communism will not use this fact as a reason for prohibiting the admiration of the heavens.

Yesterday I received a copy of Ludwig Lewisohn's Rebirth - A Book of Modern Jewish Thought. I was surprised to find myself included among the twenty-five from whose writings Lewisohn chose selections for his anthology. The uncomplimentary remark he makes about my failure "to draw power from those primordial emotional and metaphysical forces which are...the necessary origins of human change and action" is undoubtedly inspired by his comparing me in his mind with Buber whom he regards as "the most distinguished and influential of living Jewish thinkers." Buber, according to Lewisohn, possesses what I lack. I am entirely in agreement with Lewisohn. Buber is a poet and I am not. But on the other hand, I believe that Buber lacks what I possess; a sense for the realities of life.

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Tuesday, October 8, 1935

The services on Yom Kippur (Oct. 6-7) were eminently successful this year from every standpoint. Financially my appeal brought in $10,000 of which one-eighth goes to the Seminary. When some years ago I was asked to make an appeal for funds to meet the SAJ budget I stipulated that I would consent provided they would set aside for the Seminary one-eighth of the amount collected. They have lived up to that condition. This time I almost forgot about it, but fortunately Bernard Bernstein reminded me of it while I was calling for contributions and suggested that I mention it to the audience, which I gladly did.

I instituted the following changes in the service: 1) The memorial service was held after Musaf instead of before. This prevented the stampede which usually takes place after the Musaf K'dusha and leaves the synagogue more than half empty. 2) There was only a single reading of the Mincha and Neilah Amidot. 3) The people called up to Maftir did not read the Haftarah, but the cantor chanted it and the people joined in. The most important innovation, however, was the change in the benediction before reading the Torah. When I was called up to (p.55) Mafter Torah I called the attention of the people to the version I was about to use. Instead of saying אשר נתן תורה I said אשר בחר בנו לשלשת.

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Tuesday, October 15, 1935

Last Thursday night I attended the meeting called by Judge Roseman (JUdge of State Supreme Court) to discuss plans for the best method of using the funds that might be made available by the Friedsam estate. A year ago Pesah a meeting took place at my house, at which that question was discussed with Burke who is the main executor of the Fridsam estate. Willen who has been influential in interesting Burke in putting the money at his disposal to best advantage, has

gotten Roseman to head the committee that is to take over whatever educational fund might be established. The personnel of the committee has been made widely representative -- in fact too much so, I am afraid to be effective. Lowenstein, Prof. Morris M. Cohen, Benderly, Henry Hendricks, S. W. Straus, Rottenberg (of the Jewish Center) Willen, Leidesdorf (head of Federation) Judge Rosalsky and Semel, these besides the chairman and myself constitute the committee.

The discussion was to me both tiresome and depressing. Rosenman divided education into three kinds, religious, cultural and character building and indicated that he was in favor of the last. S. W. Straus was in favor of limiting Jewish education to Sunday mornings, because sports came first. Henry Hendricks (a seminary trustee) disagreed with Benderly, Cohen and me. We had insisted upon Jewish education being adapted to the needs of the children and made appealing. But Hendricks maintained that Judaism is neither race nor culture but a religion and as such it must be taught. Cohen interposed that while he was not opposed to having it taught as such where it was accepted as such, he felt that the number of those who could be appealed to on that score was diminishing. To this Hendricks replied that if it cannot be transmitted as religion it should be let alone altogether. This effusion of Hendricks' was called forth by the suggestion that I. B. Berkson be engaged to make a study of the situation and formulate a statement of what should be done to improve the present status of Jewish education. Morris Cohen spoke in high terms of Berkson and described his book on assimilation as the most sane statement he (Cohen) had come across. This led Hendricks to remark that in his opinion the character of Berkson's book was such as to indicate that Berkson was not the man to be entrusted with the working out of a plan. I was about to answer Hendricks, but I know I would have been sorry afterwards. Fortunately the meeting broke up just then and I sped home.

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Thursday, October 24, 1935

On the first day of Sukkot (Sat., Oct. 12) I preached on "Internationalism." Taking as my text the Rabbinic reason given for the seventy bullocks prescribed as the number to be offered during the Sukkot festival, I dwelt upon the fact that the Jews were the first people in the world to think in terms of humanity. The unity of God is fundamentally an expression of the wish to see all mankind as one kingdom. The principle of human equality should be extended to nations. This is possible only when both stronger and weaker nations are subject to some supernational authority. To that end it is necessary that nations form not only a League of Nations but a Federation of Nations. This implies the surrender of national sovereignty pertaining to matters of an international character.

I was so carried away by the idea that I went out of my way to deplore the fact that our Jewish young people find it necessary to turn to Communism for a course worthy of their interest and devotion, when they could turn to the ideal of internationalism as a means of preventing war. At the same time they would be pursuing an ideal which is in keeping with the moral and spiritual trend of Judaism.

For this digression I was taken to task by Ira, Judith and Naomi. We argued at considerable length the question whether it is possible to stop war by fighting state sovereignty without fighting the present economic system. At first I held my ground, but upon reflection I realized that I had made a mistake. The mistake would have plagued me had I not decided to disavow it in the address that I was to deliver on Shemini Azeret. I carried out my decision to the satisfaction I am sure not only of my own children but of quite a number of young people who had been in the audience on the first day of Sukkot.

It seems that every year toward the latter part of the summer and the beginning of the fall the physical part of me gets to be troublesome. All sorts of aches make their presence felt in different parts of the body. After I was through speaking on the first day of Sukkot I was hardly able to walk. Rheumatic pains kept shooting through my limbs. The next day I did not attend services. On Tuesday I went to Dr. Ruben to have myself examined. The physician found nothing organically wrong with me. My blood pressure registered 138 over 80 (that's the way he put it). My urine was free of sugar and albumen, the lungs clean and the heart action normal. Since then my pains have disappeared.

Wednesday, Oct. 16 I addressed the opening assembly of the IFC. I spoke on the need of shifting the emphasis in Jewish education from elementary to adult education. I repeated that talk in more elaborate form on Shemini Azeret and gave it again last Tuesday night at Dr. Ben Zion Boxer's center where a number of his people assembled for the opening of his so called Institute of Jewish Studies.

At the meeting of the Liturgy Committee last week we decidéd to postpone for the present the work on a High Holyday mahzor and to concentrate on the Friday night service. Milton Steinberg at first opposed the change but finally yielded.

* * *

Sunday, October 27, 1935

Rabbi Parzen, one of the few graduates of the Seminary who has a conscience, displays a scholarly interest in things Jewish and is a fairly good preacher had to leave his position out West because his wife could not stand the climate there. For the last two or three years he has been trying to get a position in the East, but has had no

no luck. Recently he tried for the pulpit in Peekskill. Everything seemed to be in his favor, but as fortune would have it, he happened to have stayed with one of the members on the Sabbath he was out there. In the morning before going to synagogue he took a bath. This was discovered by the member and reported at the meeting at which Parzen was being considered for election as rabbi. The outcome was that he was not elected. When he asked what was wrong with taking a bath on Sabbath morning "But you used soap," was the reply.

Rabbi Boxer in his Sukkot sermon pointed out that under present conditions unemployment can no longer be considered an evidence of laziness or ineptitude. For this he was upbraided by two of his richest members on the ground that he was defending "the bum for whom we are taxed so heavily."

I have just come from the initial meeting of an honor group that has been organized at the Teachers Institute. After going through the mechanics of organization the question arose what was to be done at the meetings of the group. It did not take very long for those present to arrive at the decision that the burning problem just now for them was Communism vs. Judaism. They can't make up their mind with which to identify themselves, and they look to the discussions to be donducted by the group to aid them in deciding.

In arranging the sermon schedule at the SAJ services this year, Ira was going to discuss the outstanding classics in philosophy and the social services and I decided to speak on Jewish ethics. It occurred to me that Ira might organize his lectures around some principle thereby not only giving unity to his course of lectures but also laying the groundwork for a permanent piece of writing. This thought came to

to me after I had had occasion to develop the following thought in the class of the Graduate School last Monday morning. The state historically has been the outcome of the predatory tendencies of those who had the power and the cunning to exercise them. The racketeering system of the underworld is an exact reproduction of the principle that has been at work in the organization of the states. But in term certain individuals in whom the ethical impulse emerged realizing more or less clearly the false basis upon which the state was established, sought to put the state upon the basis of cooperation and mutual benefit of all identified with it. These individuals have formulated their dream in various theories concerning what the state ought to be. I therefore would be interesting to write, from this standpoint, a history of political thought.

I am trying to persuade Ira to collaborate with me on a history of the kind of discussion our people ought to hear, because it would give them the proper slant on a very vital subject these days.

When I asked Lena what she thought of Ira's address, she voiced what I regarded as a very narrow and unreasonable view, when she said that people might object to that kind of discussion from the pulpit on the ground that they could hear it in Town Hall and didn't have to come to synagogue for it. I was very much wrought up when I heard that from her. It gave me the feeling that all my efforts to broaden the mental and spiritual horizon of our people were entirely wasted.

In view of all these items that I have just recorded, it is no wonder that I copied out last night the passage quoted on the fly-leaf of this book from T. E. Laurence's Seven Pillars.

* * *

Thursday, November 14, 1935

We had Louis Finkelstein and his wife for dinner on Thursday, Oct. 24. He had mentioned to me having done work on a biography of R. Akiba. I took that as an evidence of his desire to break down the aloofness in which he had kept himself last year, and I took the first opportunity I had this year of inviting him for a personal chat. We had also Ira and Judith xx with us for dinner, and on the whole we spent a pleasant evening. The one interesting topic of discussion Finkelstein and I had was the problem of the synagoguve vs. community. I succeeded, I believe, in breaking down some of the main arguments he advanced to prove that Jewish life in this country must organize itself around the synagogue.

In compliance with the request I made of him, he sent me the manuscript of his work on R. Akiba a few days after his visit. I think he could do much better. He has tried to combine schoarship with literary form, ar as Ira put it, to introduce something analagous to Schechter's studies, but very definitely failed. By attempting to derive R. Akiba from the formula of economic determinism which he has worked to death, he has destroyed whatever likelihood he had of xxxx portraying a real personality. The formula with which he has been working has been applied by a writer in German to Pharisaic Judaism (I recall distinctly having come across that interpretation of Pharasaism) and has been applied with a comparative degree of success by F. in his published article on Pharasaism. But he gets himself involved in a tangle when he tries to read that formula into all the opinions of the scholars at Yabneh.

In addition, the work deals perhaps more with the men with whom R. Akiba came in contact than with R. Akiba himself. Moreover, the talmudic and midrashic material which forms the basis of the generalizations about Akiba and the others is of such trivial character that

one wonders what all the ado is about. When I pointed out these things to F. Tuesday a week ago, he admitted that he himself realized these shortcomings but unfortunately there was not sufficient material on R. Akiba that was of intrinsic interest.

It seems that F. had been at work on this book for a long time, and had rewritten it several times in accordance with the suggestions of people to whom he had submitted the manuscript. Having begun it as an article for the Harvard Theological Review, he enlarged it with the expectation of having it appear in book form, because, as he said to me, what you write in a magazine is as good as buried. But to put out a book involves paying the publisher. He hoped, apparently, that by popularizing it, he would get a publisher who would put it out without asking him to contribute toward the cost of publication. Failing that he circulated the ms. among some of the Seminary trustees, as I gather from the fact that he had shown it to Morrison, in the hope that they would help him defray the cost of publication. With all that annoying experience and suspence after having put in so much effort on the book he was not in a very receptive mood to my suggestion that he rework the material of his book into a book on "The Vineyard" i.e. on the Academy of Yabneh and show how the Jewish people was transformed from a state into a church.

A most unexpected and to me most valuable outcome of F.'s visit was his offer to introduce me to Corici of Corici, Friede, publishers. He wrote to Corici as he promised and I met Corici and had lunch with him on Monday, Nov. 4. For once I met a layman who was interested in knowing my conception of God and who was responsive to my presentation of basic ideas concerning Jews and Judaism. I really enjoyed every minute I was with him. I left with him my ms. of "Judaism in Transition." Yesterday I spoke with him over the phone and he

agreed to publish the book at $2.50 on the understanding that I was to purchase 300 copies at 40% discount and 10% royalty on the sales. Macmillans had asked me to purchase 600 books at that price. The practical outcome of Finkelstein's visit is a saving to me of ~~$50~~ $450 and doing business with a Jewish firm and with publishers who take a personal interest in the negotiations. Even the casual suggestion that Covici made to me over the phone yesterday that I should not refer to the book as a sequel to "Judaism as a Civilization," nor as a collection of essays, is more than I got in all my dealings with Macmillans.

The SAJ carries a mortgage of $152,000 interest on which became due last August, but which has so far not been paid because some of those signed on the bond are trying to reduce it. With the assessment of the property at present at about 80 to 90 thousand dollars those signed on the bond have a very uncomfortable feeling about being held responsible for the full amount of $152,000. With the late Unterberg as one of the signers on the bond, the Unterberg estate is in a predicament in dealing with creditors. Consequently Harry Liebovitz, who has displayed more genuine interest in the SAJ and given toward it than any other member, has worked out a plan that would not only release the signers on the bond but prove a boon to the SAJ. He offers on his own and his brother Abe's behalf to advance ~~$20,000~~ $20,000 and to get the Unterberg estate to advance $20,000 more provided the rest of the membership will contribute $25,000 thus enabling the SAJ to reduce its indebtedness by $65,000.

Harry Liebovitz not only worked out the plan and offered to advance a large sum of money but is also working hard to put into effect, in spite of the odds against him. When therefore he came to see me about three weeks ago today to get my approval of his plan and promise to cooperate, I regarded it as my duty to play in with him even though

it involved giving up an evening for a dinner meeting at Joe Levy's. The dinner meeting took place last Thursday. Besides the Liebowitz's, Joe Levy and myself, the only ones present were Gewirz, Salzman, Hillson. Practically nothing was accomplished. Gewirtz kept on rubbing it into the Liebowitzs that they were getting a bargain for their money by being able to get off the bond for so little. According to him the other signers on the bond ought to do likewise and raise the $25,000 among themselves. The idea that the membership body as such had a moral responsibility to carry the burden of the SAJ meant very little to Gewirz. Hillson did recognize that responsibility but was too wary about making a contribution. Joe Levy who is one of the signers of the bond, offered to contribute $2000. For the rich man that he is, and for the important part he played in the organization and continuance of the SAJ he should have shown himself much more generous. On the other hand, realizing that his two children, Miriam and Selma, have no attachment whatever to the SAJ and are so antagonistic to Judaism that they don't come even on Yom Kippur, I cannot blame him for refusing to give generously toward the SAJ.

I am about to ginger the wounds of the Jew in me. Case No. L. Last week Sidney Matz, the son of Israel Matz the ?(p.61) *mecenas* of Hebrew writers, called me up to ask me the following she-elah: In the Matz mausoleum they are about to put in a stained glass window. In view of the fact that his father is active in the cause of pacifism (something I had never known before) he wants to affix an appropriate motto to the window. "Would it be proper to have as a motto the words from the New Testament 'Peace on earth and good will to men'"? he asked. "His father," he added, "could see nothing wrong in having that motto on his mausoleum." I gave him to understand that such a motto would be in very bad taste, especially since there is the far more appropriate one in Isaiah "Nation will not lift up sword against nation,"etc. He thought at first that

there were too many words in that verse, but after a while he withdrew the objection.

Case No. 2: One of Felix M. Warburg's sons who had been married to a Gentile, and after being divorced remarried a Jewess, got a Hebrew teacher for his children. In giving instructions to the teacher as to how he should handle the children, young Warburg told him he should be careful to break the news to his children about their being Jews gently.

Case No. 3: Last Sunday night I spoke at an SAJ Lecture-Supper-Dance affair at the Savoy Plaza on Harry Sackler's recent book "Festival at Meron." I gave a resume of the story and then my own estimate of it. They all enjoyed the second part of my address, but quite a number, I was told, especially among the women, had difficulty in being interested in my resume of the story, in spite of the fact that I gave it extemporaneously and fluently. I wondered why those people were not interested in the story itself. But two incidents gave me the clue to the answer. About two weeks ago my Selma happened to remark, when I suggested that she read the book, that she can't get herself into it for some reason or other. At the time her remark hurt me exceedingly, but I said nothing. This afternoon Miss Machlowitz, who has an inherent though untutored appreciation of literature, said to me when I asked her how she found the book "Festival at Meron" which I had lent her. "As soon as I opened to the first page and looked at names like Yabneh, Caesarea, Crispus, Rabbi Simeon I saw that the book was not for me. I hated to be made to feel how ignorant I was. One has to have a knowledge of history which I haven't got." Putting these three facts together I think I am right in inferring that the average person especially the average woman, doesn't care a straw about anything that happened in the long long ago. With Jewish life so dependent upon familiarity with ancient places and events and names what likelihood is there of our average people warming up to Jewish life?

At noon today I attended a luncheon meeting of the Opinion Editorial Board together with Marks, the publisher. Those present were Wise, Mrs. Kohut, John Haynes, Holmes and Marks. I learned that Edman had resigned. Lewisohn had never shown up and Samuels was absent. Opinion has at present a circulation of about 23,000 and is about able to balance the budget, as compared with $35,000 deficit the first year and $25,000 the second.

Marks stated that it is time for the editorial anonymity to be ended and that Wise, who had been writing the editorials since James had resigned, be officially the editor-in-chief. I suggested that the editorial board be reorganized, and that only those who actually do the writing of the editorials and attend to the editing constitute the editorial staff and the others be known as the contributing editors.

Holmes stated orally what he had written to Wise in protest against the advertising of liquors in Opinion. Wise quoted James' statement in answer to Holmes' arguments. It defended such advertising. I agreed with Homes, though not for the reasons urged by him, that such advertising was in bad taste. (Wise wisecraced about the good taste of liquors.)

In taking stock of the literary projects I am working on I find that I am engaged in the following: 1. The Meaning of God in Jewish Religion (nearing completion). 2. A New Approach to the Problem of Ethics. 3. Jewish Ethics. 4. Home Devotions and Prayers (with Eugene Kohn). 5. A Service for Sabbath Eve (with Steinberg, Eugene Kohn, Ira, etc.). As though that wasn't enough -- O yes, I forgot a sixth undertaking, the Ethical Conception of the State, in collaboration with Ira. A seventh project has taken hold of me recently. A book on the fallacies people commit constantly in their

reasoning, fallacies which are responsible for much of the distorted and vicious thinking about most of the problems which arise in our human relationships.

This last explains how it happened that I have failed to make entires into this journal since Oct. 27. I begrudge the time spent on writing up all these things. On the other hand, I don't feel happy if I allow experiences which to me are so significant to go unrecorded and in a short while to be completely forgotten as though they never happened.

* * *

Friday, November 15, 1935

Last Wednesday night I attended the meeting at Judge Roseman's house called to discuss he study of the Jewish educational situation in this city to be undertaken by Berkson. To make the committee more representative Roseman added Louis I.Newman to represent the Reformist group and Louis Finkelstein the Orthodox. Berkson told me that Finkelstein's appointment was suggested by Hendricks who explained to Rosenman that I was not Orthodox.

In the course of the discussion the question arose as to the advisability of making a canvass among a number of parents to find out how many of them gave their children a Jewish education, and if not why not. In the argument on this question it developed that while the interest in such a canvass was due to the desire to know the status of the demand for Jewish education, some wanted to know that status for the purpose of determining whether or not to go on with the work, whereas others wanted to know the status for the purpose of determining what's wrong with the work so as to know how to improve it. I was amazed to hear Lowenstein, the executive director of Federation speak in the vein of those who looked to such a canvass to help them decide whether to go on with the work.

In a newspaper clipping I received this morning I note that Louis I. Newman has broadcasted the changes I have made in the benediction before the reading in the Torah, where instead of (p.63) אשר נתן תורות I say אשר נתן לנו תורת אמת. The first time I recited the benediction in the changed form was on Yom Kippur when I was called to מפטיר יונה. Before reciting it I explained to the congregation the reason for the change. I had spoken on that reason in the sermon last Shabuot.

* * *

Tuesday, December 3, 1935

This morning at 10:38 Hadassah gave birth to a son weighing 7 lbs. 14 oz. Mother and child are doing wonderfully, The parturition was perfect. Brother Isidor, G. bless him, is the attending physician. May God grant Judith as easy a parturition. She expects her baby sometime in April. God (the sum of those forces that render life worthwhile and significant) has been, to use the conventional parlance, mighty good to me and my family. I feel happy and grateful. Would to God that all human beings had occasion to be as happy and grateful as I am.

I was lecturing this morning at the Seminary. The passage in the Midrash I was interpreting was in Gen R XXX. It read ויקרא אלהים לאור יום. I made the point that such is the significance of potentiality in human life that everything is subordinated to it. Potentiality is the end to which all else is the means. As soon as I was through with the lecture Lena phoned the goodnews. When I spoke to Nadich at lunch I told him that I had just become the grandfather of eight pounds of potentiality.

* * *

Sunday, December 22, 1935

When I was through with the lecture on Midrash I went down to the office to tell Miss Gruner who had informed me of Lena's telephone call, that she had been the bearer of good news. At that moment Dinin and Halkin came into the office and told me that Morris Levine was in the hospital and that he had asked that the members of the Faculty be apprised of his condition. At once the other half of the passage I had been interpreting came to my mind, viz: (p.64) ... and the dread thought that it augured Levine's death disturbed the happiness which the birth of my first grandchild brought me. Of course I soon dismissed that thought and almost became convinced that it was an idle fancy when upon visiting Levine in the hospital on Friday, Dec. 6 Dr. Epstein, his friend and physician told me that Levine, who had been operated on on Wednesday would be able to leave the hospital after two or three weeks. As a matter of fact, Levine's face resembled a death mask. I shuddered as I looked at his distended nostrils. The only sign of life were his eyes peering from under the pultice that lay on his head. His right hand was held in an elevated position. With his left hand, which was free, he motioned to me I should come near to him. I did and held his hand in mine for a while and wished him a ... That was Friday. Sunday morning at 10:00 he died.

The funeral took place Monday, Dec. 9 at 1:30 at the auditorium of the old Seminary building. The ones who spoke were I, Scharfstein (in Hebrew) and Finkelstein. Eugene Kohn was to have read a psalm but just as he entered the room where the final arrangements for the funeral were being made, Finkelstein reminded himself that Kohn was a kohen and ought not to participate in the ceremonies.

A word about Levine. He came to this country in 1898 as a youth of 17 after having attended a yeshibot of Wolozhin and Eishishok. His knowledge of Hebrew brought him into the circle of Hebraists who in the early years of this century constituted the (p.64)
After having completed the course at CCNY in 1904 he entered the Seminary. On graduation in 1908 he was called to head the Hebrew Institute in Chicago. After two years or so he gave up that position and headed a Talmud Torah in Brooklyn. In 1912 I asked him to join the staff of the Teachers Institute. He rejoiced in the fact that at the Institute he could devote himself completely to teaching. That was his metier. He gave himself unsparingly to the students and to the preparation of the work to such an extent that he left himself no time to do any writing. Naturally of a rather austere and somewhat pedantic nature, the lingering illness of his wife who died about seven years ago and his own subsequent illness rendered him rather unapproachable and the last years extremely cranky and nervous. To express an opinion he disagreed with was to court his wrath. In all the years that I knew him I never had occasion to spend an hour with him in the discussion of any of the ideas pertaining to Judaism. Time and again I felt as if I wanted to get closer to him and to learn about his Jewish outlook, but somehow I never succeeded. It was probably my fault as much as his. But what a sad commentary this is on our mode of life. Here were two men working side by side in the same institution for 22 years, both devoted to the same cause and yet completely insulated against each other, as it were, by a perfectly superfluous and stupid reserve which each of us kept up. O how little we know of the art of living together! and how much of life's value we thereby miss.

On Tuesday, Dec. 10 I asked Finkelstein to join me at lunch. I discussed with him the question as what should be done about the hours of instruction in Bible that Levine used to give. Since Levine had taught Bible both at the Seminary and at the Institute, I took for granted that anyone who would be appointed as Levine's successor at the Seminary would likewise teach Bible at both departments of the Seminary. I suggested that Gordis, who had been specializing in the study of the Bible, and who is a very able teacher, take over the work at both departments. Finkelstein, apparently seeing in the present situation an opportunity for saving some money for the Seminary, did not approve heartily of the idea of having Gordis take over the work in both departments. He made the counter-suggestion that the hours at the Institute be divided among the present instructors. I deprecated this move on the ground that it would impair the effectiveness of the Institute. We parted with the understanding that he would not come to Adler with any suggestion without first consulting me. The next day he called me up and urged me to accept his counter-suggestion. He repeated his argument that the resources of the Seminary were low. He would have Gordis take over the work at the Seminary, at a salary that would enable him to get an assistant for his rabbinical duties; but the Institute would have to get along without Gordis. I was very indignant at his attitude and insisted that if Gordis is to be engaged for the Seminary he should also teach at the Institute. He promised faithfully that he would make no recommendations to Adler before we came to an agreement on the matter.

On Saturday two things happened which took the fight out of me. One was a sermon I delivered that day on the Jewish conception of peace and the other a letter from Dinin asking me to consult with the other members of the Institute Faculty before approaching Adler in reference to providing for the hours left vacant by Levine's death.

In the sermon I made the point that peace was above everything and that in its interests we must go far in submitting to compromise. And Dinin's letter made it evident that he and the other members of the TI Faculty would view my recommendation that Gordis take over those hours as an unfriendly act.

When I came to the Institute on Sunday I learned that F. had gone to see Adler. I understood that he would forget his promise to me and make it impossible for my plan to be carried through. I called together the members of the TI Faculty and told them of my intention to write Gordis, explaining at the same time my reasons for doing so. Nevertheless, I stated that I would not proceed without their consent. The first one to speak up was Chertoff who maintained that the hours ought to be divided among the present instructors and that the difference between the cost of the instruction and the amount that Levine used to receive should be applied to the increase of the salaries of the other men.

When I saw F. on Wednesday at the meeting of the Seminary Faculty I had to ask him what had been done about the question of the hours. Since the time he had spoken to me on the phone the week before he had not said a word to me, but I made up my mind I won't let his crooked dealings annoy me and I therefore approached him after the meeting to find out Adler's decision. I did not betray the least anger or resentment in talking to F. All he told me was that Adler said that he would not have any new man take over the hours at the Seminary. I suspect that F. himself must have made that suggestion to Adler, because from what I have heard, he doesn't like Gordis overmuch and is probably obstructing his appointment.

* * *

Monday, December 23, 1935

Mrs. Israel Unterberg died Tuesday, Dec. 10. She had been an invalid for twelve years. With three nurses to wait on her day and night during all those years she managed to survive for a far longer period than one in poor circumstances. Whether she or anybody else benefited from such survival is another matter.

My brother-in-law the physician, Isidore Rubin (her son-in-law) knowing how hard it is for me to officiate at funerals wanted to emancipate me from the task by advising the family that with Poole giving the eulogy it would be quite sufficient if I read some prayer. I was only too glad to abide by his arrangement in which the family acquiesced because he told them I had a cold, which was partly true. In the evening I called at the Unterberg home. There I asked Clarence whether the arrangement which Isidore had made was satisfactory. From his reply I could see at once that he was displeased. I thought that perhaps if I indicated that if I were to officiate I would have to precede Poole, and knowing that that would make trouble for him it might be best to limit myself to the reading of a prayer. This remark led Clarence to tell me what had happened to Poole for allowing me to precede him at the funeral services of Israel Unterberg a year ago last May. Capt. N. Taylor Phillips, who was then president of the congregation, resigned immediately and refused to have anything to do with the affairs of the congregation or to speak to Poole. Last May the congregation celebrated Poole's 50th anniversary and gave him a large gift in honor of the occasion. Even then Phillips did not unbend. Not before Poole and two of the trustees went to Phillips and pleaded with him to forgive Poole did Phillips finally relent.

My first reaction to this story was to insist all the more on the right of precedence. But after a few moments I realized that I would be as much of a fool as Phillips if I allowed myself to be in-

fluenced by his conduct and consented to deliver a eulogy and to give Poole the precedence without any further ado.

I spoke much better than at the Levine funeral.

I received the galley proof of my book on Thursday, Dec. 12 and spent every available moment between then and Wednesday night, Dec. 18 making numerous revisions. In many instances I acted upon Miss Hanna Machlowvitz's criticism of the text, by rewriting ~~xx~~ it completely. Some of her criticisms are more helpful than those ofmy colleagues. I had asked Eugene Kohn to go through the text. He spent 18 hours for ~~which~~ which I paid him $18. I don't think he made more than two or three slight changes. After that I myself went over the text twice and found so many things to correct and revise that I would have blushed for shame if I had relied on Eugene Kohn's criticsm.

This afternoon I had lunch with M. J. Karpf and George Backer at the Chatham Hotel on W. 48 St. Karpf had told me that George Backer who was Mortimer Schiff's son-in-law, had recently become interested in Jewish life. As president of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Backer had a run-into with the Palcov. What he learned about Palestine in this way did not prove altogether edifying. At Karpf's suggestion we met for lunch to talk things over. It is K's belief that I might get Backer to develop a genuine and permanent interest in the development of Jewish life, if I were to meet him and some of his friends to discuss the subject of Judaism at length.

After the usual initial skirmishing in such discussions I discovered that the essential difficulty under which Backer seems to be laboring was that he saw no evidences in Jewish life anywhere of any inherent idealism. He maintained that in every instance where Jews display liberal or radical tendencies they do so in the hope that

it would ease their own lot but as soon as no such results would ensue for them, they are just as illiberal and chauvinistic as everybody else. In Palestine where Jews have had a chance to dispaly idealism they failed to do so, especially in their relation to Arabs, etc. (He didn't have a chance to state specifically what he referred to on that score.) He, therefore, concluded that this sterility of Judaism had prevailed even during the past centuries, and, if Jews managed to keep together, it was because they had been held together by outward pressure. He wanted to know what I regarded as of such value in Judaism that it could compensate the Jew spiritually for the discrimination to which he is subjected.

Incidentally he mentioned the instance of a classmate of John Schiff (his brother-in-law) coming to Schiff for financial assistance in a school project he was conducting. The first thing Schiff asked this classmate of his was whether he discriminated against Jews, because if the latter did, he (Schiff) could not think of helping him. Sure enough there were only two Jewish children in a school of about 80 pupils, because once the Jews would get wind that they could send their children to that school they would overrun the school and the Gentiles would immediately withdraw theirs.

* * *

Wednesday, December 25, 1935

Before the summer Opinion received an article from Rabbi Jacob B. Agushewitz which dealt critically with the thesis of Judaism as a civilization. I was asked by Opinion whether I wanted to publish a reply. I was glad to do so and the reply appeared together with his article. When I returned from Palestine he sent me directly a statement attacking my thesis from a somewhat different angle. I immediately wrote him back a reply. I have asked Eugene Kohn to expand that reply for publication purposes. Both Agushewitz's statement and this reply will appear in the fortncoming issue of the Reconstructionist.

Agushewitz is 24, a graduate of the Yeshibah and an A.B. He has a position at Norfolk, Va. Coming on a visit to his folks, he called on me this evening. Despite the Yeshibah environment in which he received his education, both Jewish and general, he is well read, thinks clearly and writes with considerable verve. His views are anything but Orthodox -- in fact they border closely on Reformism. But in his teaching and preaching he is staunchly Orthodox. When I xxxx asked him point blank how he could reconcile that attitude with the ethical standard of honesty, he answered that he saw nothing wrong in it from the standpoint of higher expediency and quoted the well known rabbinic dictate about Aaron having acted as peacemaker by inventing goodwill stories and God departing from the truth for the sake of domestic peace. He defended his work as being a means of bringing sweetness and light to the people he ministered to. He also mentioned the case of Mona Vana. The complete cynicism in all this sophistry left me almost speechless and I blurted out some incoherencies about the duty of a man telling the whole truth and not being satisfied with merely refraining from flagrant lies -- which he regarded as morally adequate. He admitted that he was the victim of inner conflict but he accepted his situation, it appeared to me, with more than legitimate acquiescence. I am afraid the Gemara psychology is too much part of him for him to be able to be intellectually honest or to feel the exhilaration of intellectual freedom.

He mentioned the fact that some of his fellow-alumni had taken him to task for engaging in a controversy with me. They maintained that in repudiating the fundamental principle of orthodoxy -- supernatural revelation -- I read myself out of Judaism. They sure are a bunch of fakers, those Yeshiba boys.

And what of our own Seminary men? I met Arlo S. Hyams yesterday. He is a seminary graduate and holds a rabbinical position in Lynbrook, L.I. Last Sunday he attended the installation ceremonies of Rabbi Harry M. Katzen somewhere in the Bronx. With him was Rabbi Louis J. Haas. Finkelstein gave the installation address. The president of Katzen's congregation emphasized the fact that the congregation over which he presided was none of those fifty-fifty propositions, but genuinely and strictly Orthodox. Finkelstein seeing Hyams and Haas squirm under those remarks told them not to enter into controversies about orthodoxy when they turn to speak came. When his own turn came, he not only said nothing in deprecation of the president's remarks, but went out of his way to voice his approval of what the president had said by condemning all "new fangled" ideas as "dangerous" to Judaism. Back to good old fashioned study of the Torah, he urged. Hyams could not entirely restrain himself, and when he spoke he ironically stressed the fact that they should realize fully what it means to be orthodox and should keep away from all problems of spiritual and social adjustment because those might lead them away from ~~krnkx~~ true orthodoxy. When Finkelstein left, he shook hands with everybody on the platform except Hyams.

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Wednesday, January 1, 1936

Herman Abramowitz was one of the four or five classmates I had all the way from public school through City College and the Seminary. Though mediocre from a scholarly and intellectual point of view he has always made a good appearance and possessed fair talent as a speaker. I recall but very few occasions when he and I engaged in serious discussion prior to the one year when both of us took graduate work at Columbia. I believe he then registered in the Semitic Dept. whereas I registered in the Dept. of Philosophy. I have a vague

recollection of his having argued for the traditional conception of Judaism in answer to arguments against which I had advanced against that conception. Having through family connections been invited in 1902 or 1903 to speak in the Shaare Shamayim Synagogue, he made a very favorable impression and he has since then functioned there as rabbi. He has not only kept that congregation intact, but has managed to increase its membership and to get it to build a synagogue center on a very large scale. Its present membership is about 350 families including some of the most influential Jews in the community. Naturally this gives him considerable prestige and influence, which he has utilized on several occasions for the good of the community. He is assisted by a large staff including a well trained director of the religious school and a director of the various congregational activities.

During the period between 15 and 10 years ago he would ask me frequently to come to speak to his people. But for some reason which I can hardly explain I did not accept his invitations. Since then I have seen very little of him and he stopped asking me to come. This year the Seminary Institute of Jewish Affairs asked me to go to Montreal. I couldn't very well refuse. The topic Abramowitz chose was "The Evolution of the Jewish Religion." I have since learned that he had inquired of Rabbi Levitsky at whose synagogue I delivered that lecture last year whether it was safe to have me speak on that topic. Having received an answer in the affirmative, he asked me to lecture on that topic before his people.

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Thursday, January 2, 1936

I left for Montreal Sunday night at 10:45 and arrived at the Windsor Station at 7:50. I was met by a young man, Arthur Super, who has charge of the educational work with the children and the young people of Abramowitz's congregation. Whether it was because Abramowitz

had been suffering from the effects of a cold, or because he did not feel like getting up at that hour, he sent this young man to meet me. We drove to the Hotel Mount Royal and there we took breakfast together. This Super is a young man of about 30. He comes from London. He studied at Cambridge and at Jews' College. Apparently unqualified to succeed as a speaker he turned to Jewish education. He is short and stocky and with somewhat stooping shoulders. His subdued voice and furtive look seem to indicate an intimidated soul. This was borne out by what I learned from him concerning his general outlook on life. He is very definitely unorothodox in his thinking, but believes that it is perfectly proper to advocate heretical views under the label of orthodoxy. Now here is a man who has not had a talmudic training, yet he manages to reconcile irreconilables. I suppose basically it is a matter of character. In any event he revealed a very clear understanding of the issues involved, but a cynical attitude toward the moral aspect of those issues. Like so many others who have spoken to me about Abramowitz, he deplored the fact that A. has encouraged a condition of mental stagnancy in the Jewish community.

A reporter from the Montreal Star came to ask for an interview. I granted it to him. I spoke about the need for congregations to give up their disparateness and to model themselves on the United Synagogue of England. Unfortunately I compared our present status to that of gypsies. The reporter included that simile in the summary that he read back to me later over the phone. Even then I let is pass. It began to haunt me a couple of hours afterwards while I was at lunch with Abramowitz, Lyon Cohen, Levinson, the president of his congregation, Rabbis Jesse Schwartz and Bender and one or two more people.

Jess Schwarz is a seminary graduate. He held a position for a time at Toronto, but he gave up the rabbinate to direct the Zionist work in Canada. He has to work very hard and has no time to do any

reading or studying. He had chosen the rabbinic calling when he was 29 in the hope of rendering service to the Jewish people, and he has been an enthusiastic adherent of mine ever since. He visited me at the hotel and we palavered. Abramowitz snowed up about 12:30 and at 1:00 we went to the Montefiore Club for lunch. It was there that the indiscretion of calling the Jews gypsies upset me and I paid but little attention to the conversation which was extremely dull. I asked Schwarz to go with me to the phone and to ask the city editor to eliminate the phrase about the gypsies. It was too late to make any changes in the first edition which was already off the press. But the editor intimated that he didn't remember having seen that phrase in the report of the interview. I breathed more freely, but not till I actually saw a copy of the Montreal Star with that phrase out was I again myself. The joy of having narrowly escaped what might have proved a very embarassing situation gave wings to my spirit the rest of the time I stayed in Montreal.

Because of this exhilaration I was able to endure Lyon Cohen who came for me to the hotel and took me in his car to his home where he showed me the morocco bound book of testimonials he had received recently from the community in honor of the fifty years of service he had rendered to various causes in Jewish life. The occasion had evidently been utilized to get together a fund for the Talmud Torah -- I don't remember whether it was 20 or 50 thousand dollars. If testimonials mean anything Lyon Cohen would have a right to consider himself one of the most perfect men of his generation. Abramowitz, Joseph Hertz, Ludwig Lewisohn, Wise, Adler and numberless others vie with each other in piling up superlatives in their laudations of him. They all grow dithyrambic in their psalmody about him. He must really be a remarkable man if he still condescends to talk to ordinary mortals, especially in view of his apparent lack of any sense of humor.

We had dinner with the Levinson family and from there we went to the synagogue. I gave my talk before an audience of about 350. I was at my best both in the main address which took me one and a half hours and in ans wering questions. The people listened attentively and asked for more. They seemed to enjoy my disregard of the traditional and conventional in the exposition of the God idea, although from the questions that some of them asked I could see that they missed some of the main points I made.

Abramowitz was rather glum after I got through, but Lyon Cohen insisted upon showing me the different parts of the synagogue, especially the main auditorium. The seating of the women is solved there in the same way as in the Jewish Center here. In fact I recall clearly one Sabbath at the Center after services meeting Cohen and some of his associates who had come to study the plan of the Center in order to incorporate into the synagogue which they were contemplating to build some of the best points in that plan.

All my available time last week and this week (Tuesday on the train and yesterday at home) was taken up with reading and revising the page proof of "Judaism in Transition." I expect to hand in all the material tomorrow.

The Haggadah - or as I have decided to call it, the Revised Haggadah - in which Eugene Kohn is collaborating with me, is taking shape. It occurred to me yesterday while talking with Judith and Ira about it that a community Seder on the second Passover night would be the ideal way of launching the Revised Haggadah.

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Saturday night, January 4, 1936

Last Wednesday we celebrated the (p.72) פדיון הבן of Jeremy Israel. I haven't made up my mind whether פדיון הבן is a tradition that merits conservation. The main point against it is that it recalls a barbaric practice. The points in favor are 1) the paucity of rites in Jewish life, and 2) the value of tracing our religious development to primitive beginnings.

Last night's Sabbath meal with Ira and Judith at our table ended in a bitter altercation between me and the children. The exchange of sharp words began with Judith's snappiness toward Ira and Lena was reenforced by Selma's saying to Lena "You've got a hell of a nerve," and her being taken to task for that by Judith. Then I sailed into Selma by saying "What else can you expect from a New College product?" This let loose upon me a storm of abuse from Judith, Selma and Naomi. By that time our nerves were taut. Just then we started discussing the communist attitude toward Palestine. Naomi made some remark justifying the communist opposition to the Jewish settlment of Palestine on the ground that it crowds out the poor Arabs. This roused my indignation and I waxed hot over the recent attempt on the part of some communists in Palestine urging the Arabs to make a pogrom on the Jews. Naomi replied that she ddn't think that was right of the Communists. "I thank you," said I in bitter irony. Then pandemonium set in. Judith, Selma and Naomi ran away shouting from the table. I remained seated. Ira rounded them up and we said grace in a most unhappy frame of mind.

I took a long walk by myself and formulated my thoughts on what had happened. I came to the conclusion that all my efforts to build up Jewish life were absolutely futile. If with the home background such as my children have, they can even for a moment question the legitimacy of the Jewish hope to find a home in Palestine, then what can I expect of the thousands of young people who have never had a chance to learn of the high ethical and spiritual values latent in Judaism or to see some of its beautiful and highly significant aspects? I was convinced that my life was a failure, and I saw that the only reasonable thing for me to do is to give up all speaking and writing outside of what I have to do to earn my living. Just how I would manage to do that in a spirit of despair about the future of Jewish life I could not clearly make out. But at least I would be free from the strain of trying to do too many things at the same time, and resign myself to a life of passivity for the rest of my days. At that moment I felt like withdrawing "Judaism in Transition" from publication, and not going ahead with the Haggada or with any other literary work on Jewish subject matter.

When I came home I told Lena, Ira and the children (Judith, Naomi and Selma) the conclusion which I drew from Naomi's and Selma's negative attitude toward Judaism. Then it was Judith's and Ira's turn to prove to me that I was wrong. Selma joined in and presently also Naomi. The discussion lasted till after 12:00 and when we separated every trace of rancor was gone, due mainly to Ira's influence.

The foregoing experience exhausted me to such an extent that I was too tired to attend services this morning.

We had Rabbi Paul Chertoff with us for lunch today.

At five Finkelstein, and his wife (nee Borgenicht) came to see me to help them settle the squabble they are having with the members of the Borgenicht family. Some years ago he (who is the son of an Orthodox rabbi in Brooklyn and brother of Louis Finkelstein) was convicted of having swindled large moneyes from people and he served at Sing Sing for about 4½ years. His wife and her three children remained penniless. She was helped by her brothers Willy and Max and by her father. In the meantime their business has been disintegrating and they are now in pretty bad shape. On the other hand, she has managed to build up a little business by herself by making use of an idea suggested to her by her husband. It had to do, I believe, with getting clothes for those who leave prison, or some such scheme. He too didn't waste his time while in prison. Having a good mind he used the opportunity to learn to write, and he informed himself of facts about life in prison, which he has since worked up into material for books, for radio talks and recently for the movies. He wrote 12000 years in Sing Sing, published, I believe, under the name of the Warden Lawes and "Cell 202." He is earning about $7000 a year but he claims that this income is precarious and the contracts for the radio may not be renewed and the pictures not turn out.

Willy, his wife's brother who had given her I think $125 monthly while he (Finkelstein) was in prison has lost all his money and moved with his wife into his mother-in-law's home. He in turn is heavily in debt to a widowed sister of his - a Mrs. Ruef who also is without means. Everybody in the Borgenicht family now seems to be bearing down on the Finkelsteins with the claim that since they are earning money they ought to reciprocate the help that had been extended to them when they were in trouble. The old man Borgenicht maintains that the Finkelsteins ought to give Willy some money wherewith he could pay Mrs. Ruef toward what he owes her. The Finkelsteins would like to

reinstate themselves, she would like to give up business because she claims she cannot work and she would like to give her children the comforts to which they had been used in their better years. He abets her in her attitude by pointing out that according to the penologists a convict who has served his term must be given a chance to build his life anew without the hampering restraint of the consequences of his crime.

Why of all persons they should have chosen me to decide for them so complicated a question of conscience, I cannot tell. I had never met the couple before, although I had known a good deal about them. It does seem that the inordinate standards of living are mainly responsible for the troubles which these people brought on themselves, and it doesn't seem as though all that they have gone through has really had any effect on them. Or perhaps it did, otherwise why would they come to me to tell them whether they were right in refusing to contribute more than they are contributing now - $25 a month toward helping the two families of Borgenicht's daughters?

A novelist or dramatist would apparently find enough material in the Borgenicht family for a saga of middle class American Jewish life. But where would the ethicist come in? Could he possibly decide on any set of rational principles exactly what the Finkelsteins should or should not do? I am beginning to suspect that any attempt to apply ethical principles to a concrete situation in which there is a conflict of interests is like trying to perform a surgical operation with an axe

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Monday, January 6, 1935

I handed in today the Haggadah material to Charles Bloch of the Bloch Publishing Co. He promised to give me within a week an estimate of the cost of publication. In trying to explain to him the difference between the biblical verse and the rabbinic interpretation, I

learned that he couldn't even read the punctuated Hebrew. And this man is the head of a Jewish book concern that is more than eighty years old. He himself is in the early seventies.

Israel Levinthal happened to be in the store while I was negotiating with Bloch. I told Levinthal what I had come for and showed him the Haggada material. He approved of it highly, but dplored the fact that I omitted the (p.75) נ"ג נ"א. He pleaded that I reintroduce them if I want the Revised Haggada to be used on a large scale. He even suggested that I do something with the שפ"ל. Of course I couldn't seriously entertain any such proposals.

In discussing the conception of God recently both from the lecture platform and in the classroom I have been stressing an aspect of it which I have never done before. I think I have a better insight now into one chief source of confusion between the religious and the philosophical conceptions of God. The conception "God" is a generic term like "man." Whereas, however, in religion "God" as a generic term is frequently used as the predicate of a sentence, it is never the subject of a sentence. The Bible uses "man" in the generic sense as a subject, e.g. אדם יחפר בוא etc., but never "God" in a generic sense. Even in the opening chapter of Genesis, where it would seem that "God" is used in the generic sense, the fact is that the term refers to a specific being. The fact that God is made the subject not only of "created," but also of "saw" and "said," and especially in the sentence "Let us make man in our image," we have all the evidences of a specific being or entity and not of God in a generic sense.

The philosophers, on the other hand, did make God in the generic sense of the term the subject of reflection. That reflection concerned itself with what the considered essential in the numerous gods that

were worshipped by the pagan world. The philosophers themselves could conscientiously continue worshiping the various deities. They saw no conflict between hat and their philosophic preoccupation with the generic concept "God."

The confusion began with those thinkers who like Euhenerics or Philo sought to identify the generic concept "God" with some particular god or gods of historical or natural religion. This process of identification had been made easier by the preparatory work of the Prophets, who had applied the process of elimination to the various deities they knew and had arrived at the conclusion that only YHWH was a God. It was one step from this conclusion to the conclusion that YHWH was God in the generic sense of the term.

I think that the incongruity of synthesizing the notion of a particular deity with the generic concept God was felt by the early Christian theologians. They thought they overcame it by arriving at the concept of the Trinity, God the father, being God in the generic sense; God, the son, being a particular deity, and God the Holy Ghost being the equivalent of godhood or that quality which constitutes the differentia of a god. It is evident that while in thought each aspect is considered separately - i.e. the generic, the particular and the attribute as such, are each hypostatized -- in actual being they are identical. I believe that something like the foregoing reasoning led to he formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity. I can see quite clearly why Christian theologians would be irritated with the Jewish philosophers, because once a philosopher accepts the reality of a specific entity as a god, he cannot remain a philosopher unless he at the same time acknowledge the concept God as a generic term, and the attribute godhood as such, in other words, becomes a trinitarian. The reason I could not believe in the Trinity is that I deny the existence of a specific or particular entity who all by himself incarnated or

particularized godhood as such. To me godhood is that aspect of reality which manifests itself in creativity and salvation. If I had been born a Christian, I could easily have reinterpreted the doctrine of Trinity in accordance with this perfectly rational interpretation of reality. All of which goes to show, as I have always contended, that the difference between Judaism and Christianity is not a theological one, but a difference of otherness.

As for Spinoza, I believe that of the three possible meanings of God, viz. the particular, the generic and the substantive (=godhood) he made use of the last one only in his Ethics and made it identical with Substance or Nature.

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Tuesday, January 21, 1936

To my amazement, I discovered last week when I read with the seminar group the first chapter of Aramah's Akedat Yizhak how much there is in common between my own approach to the God idea and that of orthodox medieval theology. To me the term God is a hypotasis of those aspects of reality that make for man's salvation, aspects such as creativity, unity, etc. Radically different as this idea may sound from orthodox theology, it is essentially the same as that advanced by the latter, when it continually stresses the fact that God cannot be known as he is in himself, but only by means of the effects of his functioning in the world, or of those aspects of the world which may be regarded as manifestations of his existence. Aramah reads that thought into the Midrash from Gen. R. which points out the difference between a human potentate and God. The potentate first identifies himself then proceeds to announce his titles or achievements. But God first declares his works - the fact that he created the world - then makes himself known. It would be just as easy to read into this Midrash what I say about God being the hypostasis of creativity.

Last Tuesday (Jan. 14) I spoke at Reading in Rabbi Routenberg's synagogue. The lecture was given under the auspices of the Seminary Institute of Jewish Affairs. My subject was "Judaism as a Civilization." There were about 300 to 350 present. I gathered that this was the first time those people heard of that version of Judaism. They were very much aroused by the frank analysis of the Jewish situation and the novelty of my presentation of Judaism. They apparently had never heard about it from their rabbi.

Yesterday I delivered a talk on "The Status of the Jewish Woman" before a gathering of women at the Unterberg Memorial Bldg. of the Seminary. The meeting was sponsored by the three groups - Hadassah Council of Jewish Women and Women's League of the United Synagogue whose N.Y. branches are conducting jointly the classes which are an extension of the work of the Friedlaender Classes.

In my talk I ridiculed the opiate administered by the writers and speakers on the subject of the Jewish woman. They always made it a point to idealize the part she played in the past and evade the problems that arise out of the status of inferiority which is the status of the woman in Jewish law. I pointed out the urgent need on the part of the Jewish women to launch a movement for their religious, civic and juridical equality. The audience was pleased with what I had to say, but gave no indication of carrying out my suggestion.

Yesterday I received ten copies of my second book "Judaism in Transition." I wish I had included in it a chapter on the status of the Jewish woman. But I must not complain. The book is gotten up attractively, and, I hope, will reach some Jews among the laity as well as the rabbinate, who will make a serious attempt to put some of its suggestions into effect.

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Saturday night, February 1, 1936

On Wednesday, January 22 I went to Boston to deliver the lecture on "The Evolution of the Jewish Religion" at the Brookline synagogue where Louis M. Epstein is the rabbi. I went there at the insistance of the Seminary Institute of Jewish Affairs. When I came I found the Men's Club having a dinner and having movies taken of them. I utilized the few minutes of conversation I could have with Epstein to orient myself with regard to him. He was among the first classes I taught at the Seminary. Being the son of an active Orthodox rabbi in Chicago, and having studied for a time in the Yeshiva he has developed a vested interest in Talmudism, and having made it a practice to be Prof. Ginzberg's neighbor every summer in Maine he has become an aspirant to archaeological scholarship and a "Wissenschaft" snob. When in the course of the conversation I asked him whether he gets the Reconstructionist, he replied, "No, I see it once in a while, but I don't get it because I am not interested in theology." If at that moment I had not had to abide by the conventions of civilization I would have punched his face. Instead I merely smiled sardonically and went on to the next subject suggested by his telling me that he was giving a course of lectures Friday nights in his pulpit on the meaning of Conservative Judaism. I was curious to know how he managed to keep his lectures theology proof, so I asked him to tell me briefly what he considered to be the difference between Orthodox and Conservative Judaism. His answer was that whereas Orthodoxy left no room for any choice between divergent opinions of rabbinic authorities including even those to our own day, Conservative Judaism believed in the right to exercise such choice except in those instances where the Talmud itself has laid down the principle that there is no choice. I can understand his answer, but from the standpoint of present day problems in Jewish life it is as relevant as Chinese Astrology.

In spite of the fact that the congregation is reputed to be Orthodox and Epstein is its spiritual leader, my talk was very well received. A number of people who came over to me after the lecture praised it in terms which implied that they wished Epstein had presented Judaism to them in that way. Epstein who heard what they said probably wasn't so happy about having invited me to speak.

The talk I gave on "Vandalism" on Sat., Jan. 25 in the series on Jewish Ethics was more successful than the preceding one on "Honesty."

Last Sunday I officiated at the funeral of Solomon Lamport. He was the brother of the late ~~Mark~~ Nathan Lamport whose daughter he married and was thus the brother-in-law as well as uncle of the Lamport brothers and sisters. He had a son, Monte, who was drowned about eight years ago while trying to save some who were in danger. His survivors are his wife and two daughters, the older of whom is married to Ezra Shapiro of Cleveland.

Solomon Lamport was not as capable a man of business as his brother Nathan. He owed his competence almost entirely to Sam Lamport's taking him into the business where his presence was of little account. Sam often reminded me of that fact and would always explain that he treated Solomon in that way out of regard for his sister whom he considered saintly. But if Solomon lacked business ability he more than made up for it by possessing a combination of traits which one rarely meets in Jewish laymen in the circles in which I move. He was a lover of Palestine and Hebrew, a devotee of Jewish learning and had the soul of a Hasid. He appreciated the significance of Jewish music and Jewish art. In addition he was amenable to the modernist reconstruction of Jewish life and thought. I had in him an ardent sympathizer and supporter in the SAJ which he joined not long after I

broke away from the Jewish Center. During the early years of our association I must have influenced him not to bear down on his son Monte with an oppressive zeal, but to allow Monte a certain degree of freedom and spontaneity. That had the effect of establishing better relations between them. In appreciation of this his wife and he presented me with a bronze reproduction of Butensky's Peace statue.

Since Monte's death he lacked the vitality which had made him a valuable asset to Jewish life. In recent years he must have come down a great deal in the world and must have suffered greatly from the failure of his plans to build for himself a home in Palestine, by helping some of his poorer relatives to settle there. He died suddenly at the age of 65.

The funeral took place at the SAJ. In my eulogy I dwelt on the fact that he embodied the conception of Judaism we stood for. This fact together with the one that he used to read the Neilah service annually for a number of years gave wings to what I had to say. I mention this fact because of the ordeal I had gone through the Friday before. In compliance with the urgent wish of Drs. Karpf and Kohs of the Graduate School I officiated at the funeral of Samuel Rabinowitz the executive director of the Jewish Aid Societies of Brooklyn. I had not known the man and I got my information about him from Kohs and Zunser. When I came to the Riverside Funeral Home I learned that he was separated from his wife. Here was a man whom I was supposed to praise for his success as a social worker unable to solve the problems of his own home. When I entered the auditorium I saw the body in a casket done up in Gentile fashion, and a small group of people sat huddled together in a dstnace. As I proceeded with the service I felt the resonance going out of my voice leaving it dry and emotionless and my words almost began tripping each other up or failing to come to their places at the right moment. And all because I was speaking

merely because I had been asked to. Yet I suppose those are unpleasant duties one must be ready to perform even at the cost of doing the thing badly, for to refuse to do it altogether would necessitate too many explanations and apologies and prevent the smooth working of one's permanent interests.

Last week I gave a series of three lectures at the YM & YWHA of Baltimore. The first night, Tues. Jan. 28 on Judaism as a Civilization, the second,(Jan. 29) on the Evolution of the Jewish Religion and the third night on "The Organization of American Jewish Life." The series was very successful. It was attended by an audience of about 250. There were more people on the last two nights than on the first night. On Thursday, David Pearlman, the executive director of the Y, who was instrumental in bringing me to Baltimore, arranged a luncheon meeting which was attended by about 25 men. The discussion dealt with the organization of the community, and I was pleased with the manner in which it was conducted. The chairman of all the four meetings was a lawyer by the name of Rosenfeld. The rabbis who attended the meetings were Coblenz, Rosenblatt and Theod. Gordon.

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Thursday, February 13, 1936

On Sunday, February 2, I met with the Honor Group of the T.I. at the Alumni Room of the Unterberg Memorial Building. In addition to Dinin and myself also Halkin and Bavli of the Faculty were present. I met them as I was going upstairs, and they asked me whether I would permit them to attend. I don't understand why they should have asked permission. I suppose they did it as a matter of form. I am glad they were present, because they could see from the discussion that what some of the students had told them about my views concerning Communism were incorrect.

The discussion turned once more upon Communism as a prerequisite to the solution of the Jewish problem. I kept on pointing out that official Communism or Marxism in demanding the acceptance of the Marxist world outlook precluded its being accepted by those of us who believe that the spiritual aspect of life, though determined in its form and content by the economic factor, can and does achieve an independence which enables it to determine the development and utilization of the economic factor. Linfield and Miss Kuselowitz insisted that it didn't matter to official Communism what one believed in. Linfield said that he would make inquiries, if I permitted him -- whether I would be accepted as a member of the Communist party, on condition that I be permitted to teach and practice Jewish religion. I did permit him, but so far I have not heard from him that they would accept me on that condition.

I am not at all pleased that the discussion with these students is always sidetracked from the problem of Jewish life and thought. It is probably due to the fact that Judaism offers little content to most of our people and that those who work in the Jewish field are uncreative. Hence all that middle-class Jews are interested in is anti-Semitism, and all that radicals care about is Communism.

On Monday, February 3 I spoke at the Harrisburgh Jewish Community Center on the question: Can a Modern Jew be Religious? Golub was responsible for getting me to speak there. I had an audience of about 250 and my talk was well received. After the lecture some of the communal leaders, including Rabbi Gelb, Mr. Brenner and others, went together with me to the home of a Mr. Kaplan for the purpose of discussing the problem of communal organization.

The Welfare Board is trying to consolidate the various institutions into a United Jewish Community. The main difficulty in the way of such consolidation is the existence of the congregations which cannot confine themselves to worship but must engage in social and cultural activities to justify their existence. They therefore duplicate and compete with the activities of the Center. This problem takes on a personal character when the rabbis, on the one hand, and the Executive Director, on the other, are unable to work out a modus vivendi between themselves. In this instance Gelb might have managed to come to an understanding with Golub, but at the last convention of the Rabbinical Assembly he presented a paper on the need of having the synagogue and center merge into a larger communal unit. Louis Finkelstein, fearing that such a step might lessen the influence of the congregational group and ultimately weaken the position of the Seminary, went hammer and tongs at Gelb. This had the effect of intimidating Gelb into taking an antagonistic attitude toward the Community Center and treating it as a rival to his synagogue. When I was at Harrisburgh I could see that Golub and Gelb were not getting along so well with each other.

On Tuesday, Feb. 4 I gave the first of two lectures I had been scheduled to deliver at Bensonhurst. These lectures are part of a series arranged by the Welfare Board with the Jewish Community Center there. The series is designated "Judaism as a Civilization" and is being interspersed with artistic evenings. My two lectures are to be followed by four which Ira is scheduled to deliver.

I had an attendance of over 400. The questions came for the most part from defenders of Orthodoxy. At the second lecture which I gave last Tuesday, the Community Council, a local organization to get the unafilliated of that section to become affiliated, had its leaders seated on the platform and in compliance with the request

which had been made of me, I pointed out the significance of such an organization for the Jews of Bensonhurst.

So far I met at Bensonhurst with a more live response to my appeal for reconstruction of Jewish life and thought than elsewhere excepting perhaps Baltimore.

In strong contrast to my experience at Bensonhurst was that which I had at the Jamaica Center where I spoke on the subject "The Future of American Judaism" on Wed., Feb. 5. The rabbi of that Center (this being a synagogue Center) is Malev, who knew of no better way of getting me to speak at his place than through the mediation of a Miss Grossel, who is conducting a lecture bureau. The whole atmosphere of the place was cold and the people were unresponsive. I felt as though I spoke in a void.

The fee at Baltimore was $150 for the three lectures. At Harrisburg they took 25 copies of "Judaism as a Civilization" at $3.33 a copy as fee for the lecture. At Bensonhurst that was the fee for the 2 lectures. At Jamaica I got $50 of which Miss Grossel took $10.

Last Thursday night (Feb. 6) Glicksman and Kraft of the Jewish Welfare Board and Moss and Rabbi Samuel Cohen of the United Synagogue met at my home. The meeting was the outcome of my suggestion that the United Synagogue ought to take steps to put an end to the conflicts between the centers and synagogues in a number of places where the two institutions function in the same territory. After a brief discussion both parties agreed to appoint a standing committee consisting of three representatives of the United Synagogue and three of the Welfare Board. This committee will take up each case where a conflict exists between the community center and the congregation and try to coordinate their activities.

I officiated last Sunday night at the wedding of Isaac Cohen's son. Last Monday night I went to congratulate Abraham Siegel and his wife on the 50th anniversary of their wedding. Having intimated to his son when he came to see me last Saturday that a contribution to the Seminary in honor of the occasion would be very acceptable, I received this morning a check for $500 which is half the amount the children of the couple presented to their parents to give it toward whatever purpose they chose.

Last night at the Seminar with the Seminary students I developed the idea of theology as an attempt to synthesize two incommensurate concepts of God, the religious and the philosophical and pointed out the need for a new theology which recognizing the fallacy in both types of God concept would accept from both types the element of truth and combine them into a genuine synthesis. The fallacy ~~is~~ in the traditional religious concept of God is that some (?p.83) *putative* being is identified as God par excellence. The mere fact that it is a being who enacts history as is the case in traditional Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism who is identified as God is enough to condemn that concept. The fallacy in philosophic thinking is that the God concept is identified with all of reality indiscriminately, which fact must lead to the Spinozistic assumption that God is Substance. This is the reductio ad absurdum of the philosophic type of God idea.

But despite the fallacy in either type of God idea there is an element of truth in both. The truth in the religious type is the fact that if a being, person or object is identified as divine, it is because it is important to the life of the group. The truth in the philosophic type is the fact that the God idea is not identified with any specific entity or object. Modern theology would be synthesizing these two truths, if it were to accept the principle that the God con-

cept represents the sum of those forces that elicit the best in man and enable him to achieve salvation. Therein we have a synthesis of the term God in the genesic sense (as used in philosophy) and of the aspect of value (which is what religion has always sought to emphasize.)

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Thursday, February 27, 1936

Now that I have resumed my work on "The Meaning of God in Jewish Religion" and find how much revising and altering of the text I shall have to do before sending it to the publishers, I feel troubled again about the acknowledgement which I expect to make in the preface with regard to the assistance afforded me by Eugene Kohn. Some time last year I gave him to understand that I would state in that acknowledgment that he had assisted me in the elaboration of the ideas or something like that. In view of all the work I had put in before I asked his assistance, and all the work I have put in since and expect to do before I am through, such an acknowledgment would not be fair to myself. I discussed the matter frankly with him this morning when he came to take part in the meeting of the Reconstructionist editorial board. The following is in substance what I said I would state in the preface: "I wish to express my indebtedness to Rabbi Eugene Kohn for recording my oral discussions with him of a number of chapters which I had worked out only in outline form, and for thus facilitating an elaboration of those outlines into their present form in this book." He gladly acquiesced in this formulation.

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Tuesday, March 17, 1936

On Tuesday, Feb. 18 I spoke at New London before Rabbi Ruderman's congregation on the subject "The Future of American Judaism." On Tuesday, March 3 I spoke at the Bridgeport Jewish Community Center on "The Evolution of the Jewish Religion."

Yesterday I turned in the page-proof of Mesillat Yesharim, on which I must have spent about twenty hours making revisions in the translation.

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Tuesday, March 31, 1936

The reason I haven't been writing in this Journal for some time is that I seem to have gotten into a cul de sac frame of mind. The things I am doing are in the nature of routine and do not point to any new developments in Jewish life of a constructive nature. Perhaps something might come of the Friedsam fund of which Burke is executor and which is supposed to be used for Jewish educational purposes. In the meantime, however, there is the danger that Willen who is Burke's adviser with regard to that fund, might take it into his head to divert it altogether from Jewish education. Judge Samuel I. Rosenman who is the chairman of the committee which is to present a plan for the use of the fund, has been applying himself conscientiously to his task and has been learning a great deal about Jewish education. Isaac B. Berkson who is the secretary of the committee and is doing the research work for it brought in reports which were discussed at the three meetings which took place at Rosenman's home. With the committee consisting of Jews whose opinions range from the extreme Orthodoxy of Henry Hendricks (who objected to the appointment of Berkson as secretary) to the atheism of Morris R. Cohen (who would have the fund used for vocational guidance), there seemed to be no possibility of its arriving at any concerted plan of action. Yet suddenly I learned that a plan was being considered involving the organization of a model school, the issuance of text books, and the excuse of supervising direction in the existing schools. First Rosenman, Willen and Berkson met with Paul Klapper, Kandel and Morris Cohen (?) to get their consent and cooperation and then they called Benderly, Chipkin

and me whom they speak of as the Jewish educators. We met in Rosenman's chambers in the Bronx County Court House last Thursday afternoon. The problem they discussed with us was the relation of the proposed organization to the Jewish Education Association and the Bureau of Jewish Education. The JEA means Semel and the BJE means Benderly. Both organizations have been endeavoring each in its own way to salvage the traditional type of Jewish education, the type which in my opinion has stood in the way of a normal and healthy development of American-Jewish life. Both Benderly and Chipkin tried very hard to link up the new organization with the JEA and the BJE. I advocated ignoring those organizations and experimenting with a type of Jewish education in which the teachers can teach what they actually believe, instead of teaching what their boards of directors expect them to believe. It became apparent in the course of the discussion that to do this the organization would have to disavow the purpose of serving as a central organization which attempts to coordinate the efforts of those already in existence.

Together with the remote prospect of Jewish education receiving a boost through the Friedsam fund there is also a remote possibility that the community movement will gain impetus through the activity of the Jewish Welfare Board. With the suspension of campaigns to put up new centers the JWB finds itself compelled to utilize its organization to coordinate the activities of the existing centers with those carried on outside them. This has led the JWB to undertake community planning for a number of smaller Jewish communities. So without any effort on my part, the community idea may materialize on a considerable scale in the not distant future.

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Thursday, April 9, 1936

On the day before yesterday (first day of Passover) Judith gave birth to a son. His parents have decided to call him Ethan. Again thanks to Isidore's care both mother and baby are doing marvelously well. At the first Seder we had Ira, Judith, Ira's parents and Myron and Ruth Eisenstein. I read from the text of the revised Haggadah which I had worked out with Eugene Kohn and it sounded very well. We enjoyed ourselves hearitly both during and after the Seder. The next morning at 6:30 Judith went to the hospital. Everyone in the house learned before they went to service about her going to the hospital. But it was kept from me because they wanted me to go through the service with a free mind. I preached on "Freedom - the Divine Dialectic of History". When I got through the audience was worked up to such a pitch of excitement that I had to repeat my request for the orderly procedure of the service. After the services Ira told me that he had taken Judtih to the hospital and that the baby was expected in the afternoon. Lena, Naomi, Selmaand I went home for lunch and we got to the hospital just a few minutes after the baby was born. Baby was born at 1:34 and we got there about 1:40. (p.850)

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Thursday, April 16, 1936

The last few days I have been having one of my occasional fits of mental dissipation and depression. The immediate cause of its onset is he obligation to write a 9000 word article for the Historical Volume to be issued by the Seminary on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of its establishment. The article has to deal with the work of the Teachers Institute. If I were permitted to tell the truth I would have to blame the Seminary authorities, both directors and faculty, for the failure of the Institute to conquer the problem of Jewish education in this country. Jewish education is at present very much

on the downgrade. The Teachers Institute may have slowed down somewhat the speed of the descent, but it certainly has not stopped the descent. The Seminary has missed its opportunity. It has permitted a whole generation to pass without laying the groundwork of Jewish life in this country. The chief blame rests upon Schechter and Adler, whose imaginations never ranged beyond the little congregational school in a quiet small town community. Such a school constituted the objective of all their ideas about Jewish education. Somehow with all their talent for archaeology and history, or perhaps because of it, such men have no real understanding of the social forces at work in our own day. They are blind and deaf to the surging and swirling of the floods of change that are sweeping away the little that is left us Jews of our past. Thanks to leadership such as theirs, a man like Schiff donates $50,000 as a fund the income of which was expected to half-suffice for the maintenance of a training school for Jewish religious teachers. Compared with what that kind of school ought to cost, that donation was a mere bagatelle. My heart sank within me when I opened the TI in Sept. 1909 with a handful of applicants, most of whom followed me from the Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun where I had functioned as rabbi for five and a half years. So anxious was I to get away from orthodoxy that I was glad to do anything for a living. But I knew from the first moment that my hopes and ambitions to work Jewish life on a scale commensurat with its needs would be hedged about by the unimaginative conceptions which the Seminary authorities entertained concerning Jewish education. When Benderly came along and the Kehillah gave promise of developing Jewish education on a community scale, I had to fight Schechter and Judge Greenbaum to permit me to cooperate with Benderly and to enlarge the scope of the TI. But with the collapse of that communal venture, due to Magnes' and Benderly's bungling, and during the last few years, as a result of the economic depression, the TI is today operating in a

vacuum. The entire business of Jewish education is today financially, and what is worse, spiritually, bankrupt. There is practically no demand for Jewish knowledge. The limited energy and resources that might be used for Jewish purposes are nowadays being drained off by the numerous drives to help our European brethren in Germany and Poland and to provide for them havens of refuge.

I am perturbed at the present time because of the confusion created by the United Palestine Appeal and the Jewish Distribution Committee Appeal working separately. The UPA drive among the SAJ members has resulted in $17,000 being pledged. Now the JDC is pestering me to get money for their drive. A few days ago Benjamin Winter and Kandel of the Polish Federation came to ask me to enlist the Seminary students in their campaign for $1,000,000, i.e. to ask them to address the various lodges of the Polish Federation.

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Saturday night, April 18, 1936

Last night I wanted badly to write in this journal some of the things I had on my mind, but I could not get myself to do it. Some years ago I managed to overcome my scruples against writing on Sabbath, but I have not been able to develop complete equanimity with regard to writing on the Sabbath as I have developed, say, with regard to turning on the lights. Basically, I believe the main cause of the inhibition against writing on Sabbath is not any inherent objection on the ground that writing is not in consonance with the Sabbath spirit. On the contrary, affording me as it does spiritual pleasure, I should feel perfectly at ease about it. I think, therefore, that I have been inhibited mainly by the consideration that even those who are in sympathy with my views are under the impression that I do not write on the Sabbath. I therefore do not want to do anything in the privacy of my room